

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 310710
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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 310710

NESCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNESCO, IS

SUBJECT: UNESCO: ISRAELI VIEWS ON CONTINUED PARTICIPATION
AND PAYMENTS

REF: TEL AVIV 8469; PARIS 37274

1. ISRAELI MINISTER-COUNSELOR HANAN BAR-ON CALLED ON IO
ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEWIS DECEMBER 17 TO PRESENT ISRAEL'S
CURRENT POSITION ON CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN UNESCO AND
PAYMENT OF DUES.

2. BAR-ON SAID GOI POSITION IS THAT BOTH ISRAEL AND THE
U.S. SHOULD REMAIN MEMBERS OF UNESCO, BUT SHOULD PAY ONLY
AS MUCH OF THEIR DUES AS LEGALLY NECESSARY TO RETAIN THE
RIGHT TO VOTE. THEY FELT THAT THE PRESSURE TACTICS WE HAD
EXERCISED HAD PRODUCED RESULTS, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 310710

FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IF "PRESSURE KEPT ON." THE GOI
REGARDED THE OUTCOME OF THE REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS ISSUE (IN
WHICH ISRAEL HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO EUROPEAN REGION) AS VERY
SATISFACTORY AND THEY APPRECIATED ROLE OF THE U.S. IN
ACHIEVING THIS. THE OUTCOME ON OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND
JERUSALEM ISSUES, HOWEVER, WAS HIGHLY UNSATISFACTORY.

3. LEWIS SAID WE AGREED COMPLETELY THAT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, AND THAT WE SHOULD PUSH HARD IN EX BOARD FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT. HE QUESTIONED, HOWEVER, WHETHER CONTINUED WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS WOULD NOT NOW PRODUCE OPPOSITE POLITICAL IMPACT FROM THAT DESIRED. HE CITED POSSIBLE BACKLASH FROM AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO BELIEVE THEY HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL TO ACCOMMODATE TO "U.S. AND ISRAELI PROBLEM." THEY NOW EXPECT TO SEE US BE FORTHCOMING IN MATTER OF PAYMENTS. BAR-ON SAID THEY HAD HEARD THE ARGUMENT ABOUT THE ADVERSE REACTION TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL IF THE U.S. DID NOT PAY IN FULL, BUT THEY THOUGHT IT MORE LIKELY THAT, IF HE REALLY WANTS TO DEPOLITICIZE UNESCO, HE WOULD FIND CONTINUING U.S. PRESSURE TO BE HELPFUL. LEWIS EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE IN UNESCO VOTING PATTERN, THE IMPORTANCE OF UNESCO PROGRAMS TO AFRICAN STATES, AND THE RESENTMENT THEY WOULD CERTAINLY FEEL TOWARD ANY GOVERNMENT WHOSE ACTIONS LED TO A SHARP REDUCTION IN THESE PROGRAMS.

4. BAR-ON SAID THAT THE JERUSALEM EXCAVATIONS WOULD SOON BE TERMINATED, BUT THE GOVERNMENT, ITSELF, WOULD NOT MAKE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THIS. ON THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ISSUE, HE EXPECTED THAT THE NEXT MOVE WOULD BE A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, BUT HE HOPED THAT THIS WOULD BE DELAYED AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION, WERE THE GOI TO ACT NOW ON A REQUEST FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (TO SEND IN A TEAM TO GATHER INFORMATION ON EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES) THE DECISION
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 310710

PROBABLY WOULD BE NEGATIVE.

5. LEWIS POINTED OUT THAT IF U.S. PAYMENTS ARE TOO SMALL, THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL MIGHT CONTRACT FURTHER LOANS FROM THE ARABS, AND HE ALSO WOULD HAVE TO CALL AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO DEAL WITH THE FINANCIAL CRISIS. AT SUCH A CONFERENCE, BOTH ISRAEL AND THE U.S. WOULD BE SHARPLY ATTACKED FOR HAVING PRECIPITATED THE CRISIS. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, WE COULD EXPECT LITTLE FURTHER HELP FROM AFRICANS (OR PERHAPS EVEN MANY WEST EUROPEANS) IN FENDING OFF NEW RADICAL ARAB INITIATIVES TO ISOLATE ISRAEL. OUR CONTINUED WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS, THEREFORE, COULD WELL STIMULATE FURTHER POLITICIZATION RATHER THAN REDUCE IT.

6. BAR-ON NOTED THAT ISRAEL WAS RECEIVING QUIET REQUESTS FROM SOME AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS FOR A RESUMPTION OF ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT RELATIONS WITH

THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES, FOR BOTH ISRAEL AND THE U.S., WOULD
HINGE ON WHAT HAPPENS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

7. BAR-ON SEEMED SOMEWHAT SWAYED BY ARGUMENT ABOUT
DANGER OF TRIGGERING SPECIAL SESSION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE
IN 1977, AND PROMISED TO REPORT LEWIS' VIEWS TO JERUSALEM.

8. EMBASSY TEL AVIV SHOULD FIND EARLY OCCASION TO
REINFORCE ARGUMENTS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY--STRESSING
OUR OVERRIDING WORRY IS TO AVOID SITUATION IN WHICH
ISRAEL AND U.S. BECOME ISOLATED FROM AFRICANS. ALSO,
EMBASSY SHOULD NOTE WE FIND IT HARD TO SEE HOW ANY
ACTION WHICH FORCES M'BOW TO BECOME FURTHER FINANCIALLY
INDEBTED TO ARAB STATES FOR UNESCO'S SURVIVAL CAN
ADVANCE ISRAELI INTERESTS IN THE ORGANIZATION.
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